

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus which is connected to a plurality of printers through a network, which has a plurality of printer drivers and a virtual printer driver, which selects a specific printer from among the plurality of printers, and which transmits print data to the selected printer, comprising:

setting means for setting print conditions of a print job via a user interface of the virtual printer driver;

intermediate print data generating means for receiving a drawing function formed by a graphic engine of an operating system on the basis of a draw command from an application program, and generating intermediate print data on the basis of the drawing function, the intermediate print data having a format independent of a printer to which the intermediate print data is to be output;

print condition obtaining means for obtaining, in response to the generation of the intermediate print data by said intermediate print data generating means, the print conditions set by said setting means to print the print job of the intermediate print data generated by said intermediate print data generating means;

search condition transmitting means for transmitting the print conditions obtained by said print condition obtaining means as printer search conditions to a search server;

selecting means for selecting a printer to which the intermediate print data should be output on the basis of device designation information obtained from the search server in accordance with the printer search conditions; and

intermediate print data output means for selecting a printer driver corresponding to the printer selected by said selecting means and outputting the intermediate print data to the graphic engine of the operating system so as to transfer the drawing function to the selected printer driver.

2. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said intermediate print data output means converts said intermediate print data into a draw command which can be interpreted by said graphic engine of the operating system and outputs said converted draw command to said graphic engine.

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said intermediate print data output means selects the printer driver to which the drawing function should be output when the draw command is output to said graphic engine.

4. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said print condition obtaining means obtains said print conditions from said intermediate print data and a print setting of said print job.

5. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said print conditions include function information of devices connected to said network.

6. (Currently Amended) An information processing method for an information processing apparatus which is connected to a plurality of printers through a network, which has a plurality of printer drivers and a virtual printer driver, which selects a specific printer from among the plurality of printers, and which transmits print data to the selected printer, comprising the steps of:

a setting step of setting print conditions of a print job via a user interface of the virtual printer driver;

an intermediate print data generating step of receiving a drawing function formed by a graphic engine of an operating system on the basis of a draw command from an application program and generating intermediate print data on the basis of the drawing function, the intermediate print data having a format independent of a printer to which the intermediate print data is to be output;

a print condition obtaining step of obtaining in response to the generation of the intermediate print data by said intermediate print data generating step, the print conditions set by said setting step to print the print job of the intermediate print data generated by said intermediate print data generating step;

a search condition transmitting step of transmitting the print conditions obtained by said print condition obtaining step as printer search conditions to a search server;

a selecting step of selecting a printer to which the intermediate print data should be output on the basis of device designation information obtained from the search server in accordance with the printer search conditions; and

an intermediate data output step of selecting a printer driver corresponding to the printer selected by said selecting step and outputting the intermediate print data to

the graphic engine of the operating system so as to transfer the drawing function to the selected printer driver.

7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein in said intermediate print data output step, said intermediate print data is converted into a draw command which can be interpreted by said graphic engine of the operating system and said converted draw command is output to said graphic engine.

8. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 7, wherein in said intermediate print data output step, the printer driver to which the drawing function should be output is selected when the draw command is output to said graphic engine.

9. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein in said print condition obtaining step, said print conditions are obtained from said intermediate print data and a print setting of said print job.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 6, wherein said print conditions include function information of devices connected to said network.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for an information processing method for an information processing apparatus which is connected to a plurality of printers through a network, which has a plurality of printer drivers and a virtual printer driver, which selects a specific printer from

among the plurality of printers, and which transmits print data to the selected printer, wherein said program comprises the steps of:

a setting step of setting print conditions of a print job via a user interface of the virtual printer driver;

an intermediate print data generating step of receiving a drawing function formed by a graphic engine of an operating system on the basis of a draw command from an application program and generating intermediate print data on the basis of the drawing function, the intermediate print data having a format independent of a printer to which the intermediate print data is to be output;

a print condition obtaining step of obtaining, in response to the generation of the intermediate print data by said intermediate print data generating step, the print conditions set by said setting step to print the print job of the intermediate print data generated by said intermediate print data generating step;

a search condition transmitting step of transmitting the print conditions obtained by said print condition obtaining step as printer search conditions to a search server;

a selecting step of selecting a printer to which the intermediate print data should be output on the basis of device designation information obtained from the search server in accordance with the printer search conditions; and

an intermediate print data output step of selecting a printer driver corresponding to the printer selected by said selecting step and outputting the intermediate print data to the graphic engine of the operating system so as to transfer the drawing function to the selected printer driver.

12. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 11, wherein in said intermediate print data output step, said intermediate print data is converted into a draw command which can be interpreted by said graphic engine of the operating system and said converted draw command is output to said graphic engine.

13. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 12, wherein in said intermediate print data output step, the printer driver to which the drawing function should be output is selected when the draw command is output to said graphic engine.

14. (Previously Presented) A medium according to claim 11, wherein in said print condition obtaining step, said print conditions are obtained from said intermediate print data and a print setting of said print job.

15. (Original) A medium according to claim 11, wherein said print conditions include function information of devices connected to said network.

16. (Currently Amended) An information processing program for an information processing method for an information processing apparatus which is connected to a plurality of printers through a network, which has a plurality of printer drivers and a virtual printer driver, which selects a specific printer from among the plurality of printers, and which transmits print data to the selected printer, wherein said program comprises the steps of:

a setting step of setting print conditions of a print job via a user interface of the virtual printer driver;

an intermediate print data generating step of receiving a drawing function formed by a graphic engine of an operating system on the basis of a draw command from an application program and generating intermediate print data on the basis of the drawing function, the intermediate print data having a format independent of a printer to which the intermediate print data is to be output;

a print condition obtaining step of obtaining, in response to the generation of the intermediate print data by said intermediate print data generating step, the print conditions set by said setting step to print the print job of the intermediate print data generated by said intermediate print data generating step;

a search condition transmitting step of transmitting the print conditions obtained by said print condition obtaining step as printer search conditions to a search server;

a selecting step of selecting a printer to which the intermediate print data should be output on the basis of device designation information obtained from the search server in accordance with the printer search conditions; and

an intermediate print data output step of selecting a printer driver corresponding to the printer selected by said selecting step and outputting the intermediate print data to the graphic engine of the operating system so as to transfer the drawing function to the selected printer driver.

17. (Previously Presented) A program according to claim 16, wherein in said intermediate print data output step, said intermediate print data is converted into a draw command which can be interpreted by said graphic engine of the operating system and said converted draw command is output to said graphic engine.

18. (Previously Presented) A program according to claim 17, wherein in said intermediate print data output step, the printer driver to which the drawing function should be output is selected when the draw command is output to said graphic engine.

19. (Previously Presented) A program according to claim 16, wherein in said print condition obtaining step, said print conditions are obtained from said intermediate print data and a print setting of said print job.

20. (Original) A program according to claim 16, wherein said print conditions include function information of devices connected to said network.